

to collect over 500 stuffed animals and deliver them in person to children in need at a ceremony at the State House in New Jersey.

The young ladies' kindness and commitment in the aftermath of such a tragedy exemplifies the spirit and tenacity of America. The compassion shown to our fellow man during this atrocity has revealed many heroes among us, not the least of which are the ladies of Troop #2765.

I wish to thank these brave young women for their tremendous contribution to the recovery efforts, and for helping us all gain some perspective in a time of national tragedy.

TRIBUTE TO BARBARA ALEXANDER, ADVOCATE FOR EDUCATIONALLY DISADVANTAGED CHILDREN

HON. GEORGE MILLER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 13, 2001

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the passing of Barbara Alexander, a very special woman whose life was dedicated to aiding children. Barbara is best known as a loving, energetic, feisty, and diligent advocate for advancing educational opportunities for children, especially children from economically disadvantaged families. Her courageous efforts continued until her untimely death at age 64 on November 27th of this year.

Born in Beaumont, Texas, Barbara moved to Richmond, California, in my congressional district, with her family when she was 7 years old. She met her future husband, Billy Alexander, while in church one Sunday. Barbara was married to Billy for 44 years and was the proud mother of three daughters, five sons, seven grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.

Barbara's activism on behalf of public school children began in 1963, when her eldest daughter, Gaye, entered kindergarten at Coronado Elementary School in Richmond. She volunteered countless hours at the school and joined the Parent Teacher Association and the school advisory council. In the 1970s, Barbara and Billy successfully won a court decision against the Richmond Unified School District and the State of California for their handling of federal funds committed for special education students under Title I. Soon afterward, Barbara's involvement in education and her fight for the rights of disadvantaged children intensified. She served as a member of the National Coalition for Title I Parents, and the California Association for Compensatory Education. Barbara continued her lifelong passion for poor children by pioneering programs to assist low-income children such as Dreams for Children, which raised money to take low-income children shopping for Christmas, a Day of Sharing at Nystrom Elementary School, weekend tutorial programs, and a summer school program called Summer of Hope.

In recent years, the Alexanders founded the West Contra Costa Back-To-School Festival, an annual event that brings together busi-

nesses and community organizations to provide free school supplies, health screenings and community services to students attending schools in Contra Costa County. Last September, about 2,000 students and their parents benefitted from the event. Billy fondly calls Barbara a modern-day "Robin Hood" because she passionately helped poor children and their families even when her own family was experiencing financial difficulties. I want to thank Billy personally for the sacrifice he and his family made throughout the years. Barbara Alexander was a model for us all. Indeed, her passion and advocacy will continue to inspire us to explore ways to improve educational opportunities for all children.

Mr. Speaker, today the House is going to pass historic legislation to reform the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, a law to benefit disadvantaged public school students first enacted in 1965. I would like to think that Barbara Alexander would be proud of the work we have done in this bill to ensure that federal aid to schools in fact is targeted, better than ever before, on those children most in need of help. I would like to think that she would be proud of our efforts to ensure that all children are taught by qualified teachers, that they have quality after-school programs and that they will benefit from the bright lines we will soon draw with regard to our expectations for schools. Our bill is rooted in the belief that all children, no matter what their backgrounds, can learn equally well as their schools have the proper resources and a qualified teaching staff. I believe these are the goals that Barbara Alexander spent many years of her life fighting for, and I will think of her today, and the children she fought for, as we pass this historic bill.

HELP AMERICA VOTE ACT OF 2001

SPEECH OF

HON. JOSEPH CROWLEY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 12, 2001

Mr. CROWLEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 3295, The Help America Vote Act. I would like to thank the gentleman from Ohio, Mr. NEY and the gentleman from Maryland, Mr. HOYER for their diligent work in getting this legislation to the floor quickly enough for it to make a difference in the upcoming 2002 elections.

The Presidential election of 2000 highlighted the numerous problems within our federal election system. Voting machines broke down, thousands of votes were discarded due to damaged ballots over or under votes and hanging, dimpled and pregnant chads. The situation was especially grave in our minority communities, especially African-American neighborhoods. The United States election process broke down, as did the voter's confidence in it. We all came to this House just under a year ago, promising to immediately act to fix the many problems we discovered. Today we must take the opportunity to restore public confidence in the integrity of the electoral process.

With the passage of this important legislation, we will finally demand minimum Federal

standards for voter registration. H.R. 3295 would also mandate minimum standards on the equipment used to cast ballots, and the procedure used to determine what is and is not a vote on every variety of voting machine used in this country. This will eliminate confusing and contradictory local laws that made a mockery of the 2000 election's Florida recount. This will establish standards that every State must meet for every Federal election.

Passage of this bill will also authorize \$2.65 billion in funds to help meet these new high standards by replacing outdated voting equipment, and educate voters about the election process. Of this money, \$400 million is to help States replace outdated and unreliable punch card voting systems, the antiquated system which led to the Florida turmoil, and another \$2.25 billion is to help States improve their equipment, provide greater access to disabilities, better train poll workers, and educate voters about their rights.

Although I support this bill as a good start towards desperately needed reform, I recognize that it does not solve all of our election difficulties. I am very disappointed that the Rules Committee did not make in order the amendment offered by my good friends Mr. MENENDEZ of New Jersey, Ms. DELAURO of Connecticut, and Ms. JOHNSON of Texas. Their amendment would have solved many of the deficiencies contained in the bill, and make it more compatible with the bills currently being considered in the Senate.

Their amendment would mandate that the voting authorities begin to inform voters of a mistake in their ballot of voting for either too few or too many candidates. Nearly 200,000 ballots were thrown out of the Florida Presidential ballot because of over or under counting, and the technology to prevent this from occurring again is available. We should be using it.

The amendment would also require accessibility to alternative language voting for people with a limited grasp of English. This is a vital issue to me because the people in my congressional district, the Seventh District of New York, are native speakers of over 70 different languages. These hard working American citizens are just as entitled to vote as everyone else and should not be intimidated by the electoral process—something every citizen should hold dear.

Beyond that, this amendment ensures that the standards of the motor-voter law remain in order, to ensure that States cannot purge people from their rolls if they fail to vote in two consecutive Federal elections. It requires provisional ballots to be provided to voters missing from precinct registers, and notice be provided as to whether their residency was established and their vote counted following Election Day. The amendment ensures that national standards are maintained for error rates for voting machines, in addition to the other standards already established.

Although the Rules Committee did not make this amendment in order, I believe it is vitally important that these provisions be added to any bill that becomes law. Nonetheless, I continue to support H.R. 3295, which is a very good step in the right direction and support its passage today. But I hope that the Senate passes a bill containing all of these important

provisions, and we are able to adopt it all in conference.

This bipartisan legislation has the endorsement of the National Commission on Federal Election Reform and its distinguished chairmen, former Presidents Carter and Ford. The National Conference of State Legislators and the National Association of Secretaries of State, both of which will have to deal with its mandates, have also endorsed it. They all recognize that this bill is the best way to help rectify the problems of the 2000 election, and ensure that debacle never occurs again.

I urge a "yes" vote on H.R. 3295. Thank you Mr. Speaker and I yield back the balance of my time.

TRIBUTE TO WORLD WAR II FLYING ACE, RICHARD WEST OF CHILLICOTHE, MO

HON. SAM GRAVES

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 13, 2001

Mr. GRAVES. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to World War II flying ace Richard West of Chillicothe, MO. A member of 35th Squadron, 8th Fighter Group, 5th Air Force stationed in the South Pacific, Richard shot down 14 Japanese fighters during 1943 and 1944. He was one kill away from being a triple ace.

Amazingly, in his 173 combat missions flying P-40 Warhawks and P-38 Lightnings, Richard saw air-to-air combat only eight times. However, one of those times he shot down four planes, another time he shot down two planes.

Along with other American aces in the South Pacific, West's character became legendary as the "Samson of the Pacific". In the book, "Fighter Aces," it is said that he refused to cut his hair until he downed his first Japanese plane. Richard also authored his own book, "Three Songs and Other Poems," a book depicting the drama of air-to-air combat.

Richard West is a highly decorated war veteran who helped shape the course of our Nation. He is a member of the "greatest generation" and deserves our respect and thanks. I am proud to announce that on Saturday, January 12, the Chillicothe Municipal Airport Terminal Building will be named in his honor, a memorial long overdue. I thank Richard West for his service to our country.

INTRODUCING THE HUD HOUSING AND SECURITY FLEXIBILITY ACT

HON. GENE GREEN

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 13, 2001

Mr. GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I would like to call to the attention of the House an innovative program created by the Houston office of the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) in conjunction with local law enforcement agencies in the Houston area. This program, utilizing grant money from

the Operation Safe Home program, hires off-duty law enforcement officers to provide security and patrol housing complexes and apartments that are owned by or receive funds from HUD. This program has been a great success, and has made residents feel safer and more secure in their homes.

Unfortunately, this program turned out to be too innovative. Although this initiative has been an unqualified success, it turns out that HUD did not have the authority to make these types of security decisions. I believe that we should allow our local communities and those who know them best the flexibility to pursue the solutions that will decrease violence, drug use, and other crimes that plague much of the public housing in our nation today. I do not believe that Americans who need assistance with housing costs should be forced to live in fear.

That is why I am introducing the HUD Housing Security and Flexibility Act. This legislation would allow HUD to hire local law enforcement agencies for these purposes. It authorizes offices that receive or administer funds under either of the aforementioned programs to enter into contracts with police departments and other agencies. These contracts would be limited to 3 years in length, and would be solely for security, patrols, or other protective services at HUD-owned or -assisted housing.

Mr. Speaker, I feel that this legislation will go a long way toward eliminating crime in our public housing, and making Americans feel safer in their homes. I hope that the Congress will take up this important legislation during the 107th Congress.

SOCIAL SECURITY GUARANTEE PLUS ACT OF 2001

HON. E. CLAY SHAW, JR.

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 13, 2001

Mr. SHAW. Mr. Speaker, today, I am introducing the Social Security Guarantee Plus Act of 2001 to save Social Security. I believe strongly that we can and will work in a bipartisan manner to save Social Security, provided we choose to legislate for the next generation, not the next election.

Two-thirds of a century ago, Social Security's framers designed the program to meet certain promises for the American people: the promise of a safety net of financial security, the promise that all workers would be treated fairly, the promise that Social Security would be owned by workers, for workers, and a program that workers and their families could count on should they retire, suffer disability, or die. However our nation's current demographics and economics have changed, and Social Security's ability to continue meeting these promises is threatened. The Social Security Guarantee Plus Act I introduce today will enable Social Security to continue keeping its promises.

First, through this plan, the Social Security safety net is fully preserved. Promised benefits, including cost of living increases, are guaranteed for those already receiving retirement, survivors, and disability benefits, those about to receive those benefits, and future generations.

Second, the plan treats all workers fairly. Workers have paid into the system, it's their money, and we must protect and enhance their investment. It's not fair to workers to raise their payroll taxes or lower their benefits. Nor is it fair for the government to tell workers to work longer. I do not want to create another "notch." That's why my plan does not raise taxes, does not lower benefits, and does not change the retirement age.

Third, Social Security dollars belong to the workers that sent them here, therefore this plan gives workers a real ownership stake in the program by allowing workers to choose to receive a tax cut to invest directly in safe, individually-selected, market investments. A new nation of savers, not the government, will control their retirement security. Should an individual die before becoming eligible, the balance of their money will be passed along to their heirs.

Fourth, under my plan, Social Security can be counted on for the next 75 years, and beyond. Real assets guarantee current and new expanded benefits, not Government IOUs, establishing a sound and sustainable financial footing. There will be no more need to increase taxes or lower benefits every few years to keep the program working.

Beyond keeping these promises, we must do more to further improve Social Security for the women of our nation. Because of their longer life expectancies and lower earnings, women are more likely to suffer poverty in old age and therefore heavily depend on Social Security's vital safety net. In addition, because benefits are based on earnings, women are penalized when they choose to stay home to raise their children. The Guarantee Plus Plan increases protection for women, not only by securing the future of the current Social Security and guaranteeing full benefits, including cost-of-living adjustments, but also by enhancing benefits for widows, divorced spouses, and working mothers. These benefits become available immediately in my bill.

Congressman WALTER JONES (NC-03) said "we, as members of Congress, have a duty to our seniors to ensure their retirement security will not be jeopardized." I couldn't agree more. Therefore, the bill includes a provision, similar to that introduced by my friend WALTER JONES, where each beneficiary will receive a legally enforceable certificate guaranteeing his or her benefits.

Here's how the Social Security Guarantee Plus Plan works. The plan guarantees full, promised, current law benefits for all workers, whether you are 6 or 65. Just as companies must back your pension plan with real assets, the Guarantee Plus Plan saves Social Security by setting aside real assets, not IOUs, to pre-fund benefits. These assets are saved in each worker's own account, thereby providing workers the opportunity to create real wealth for themselves and their families.

Workers who choose to participate will receive a refundable credit of 2-3% of their earnings to establish their own Social Security Guarantee Account. Workers, not the government, would select where to invest their Guarantee Account funds. The assets in these accounts would grow tax-free. No withdrawals would be permitted until a worker starts receiving benefits to ensure that the money is preserved for retirement.